



Muslim Arts and Culture Festival (MACFEST) returns with first ever Muslim Arts Awards, vibrant events and Heritage Tours

Welcome to MACFEST 2024, a ground-breaking and award-winning international Muslim Arts and Culture Festival. Hosted in several towns and cities, theatres, art galleries and libraries, schools and colleges across the North West, it is celebrating and supporting Muslim Culture, Heritage, Cuisine, Crafts, Arts and Artists locally, nationally and globally. Starting on 2nd March at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, it launches the first-ever Muslim Arts Awards in partnership with the University of Salford.

MACFEST was conceived and initiated by Qaisra Shahraz, MBE after the Manchester bombings of 2017. As MACFEST's founder and executive director, she had a vision of united communities, free from division and accepting of differences. To fight back against racism and Islamophobia, MACFEST began in 2018 to help introduce the city to the world of Muslim culture, hoping to fight ignorance with cultural awareness.

MACFEST's mission is to celebrate the arts, promote diversity and connect communities. MACFEST offers a rich feast of over 75 events from 18th February to July 30th, celebrating the vibrant, multilayered heritage of the Muslim diaspora communities. Nearly all the events are free. The festival consists of the following 9 themed mini-Festivals: Youth, Women's, Ramadan and Eid, International, Museums and Libraries, Words and Books, Environment, Calligraphy and Arts, and North-West. The international feast of engaging and educational events connects the viewers and participants to our hosts and artists in Afghanistan, Dubai, Hawaii, Canada, Pakistan, Jakarta, South Africa, Morocco and the USA.

The festival offers something for the whole family: literature, art, history, music, performance, photography, culture, comedy, art exhibitions, demonstrations, debates, women and youth panels, children's activities, and art workshops. We are bringing you a great line-up of local, national and international speakers from Manchester to the USA: performers, writers, academics, photographers, comedians, poets, film makers, actors, artists and singers.

This year's instalment of MACFEST is set to be the biggest ever. Joining forces with Muslim Women's Arts Foundation, Manchester Histories Festival, and Creative Manchester and Health Inequalities research platforms at the University of Manchester, it promises a great diversity of speakers and artists, shedding more light on women's experiences and contributions to culture that often go unnoticed. There are many highlights: Carpet weaving from Pakistan, Indonesian guitars, Mosaic art and Turkish/Ottoman Illumination workshops, Islamic and Chinese Calligraphy, Faith and Fashion, Ramadan in Albania, First Moroccan communities in Manchester, Food and Healing, Afghani women artists from Kabul, Emirati Cuisine, and finally Books with Rukhsanna Guidroz, Sefi Atta and Prof Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, to name a few.

Focusing on culture instead of religion and politics, MACFEST draws cultural fragments from across the Muslim world, forming meaningful connections and collaborations with Manchester Lit & Phil Society, Huddersfield Literature and Liverpool Arab Arts Festivals. This international festival, with collaborators from all over the world, is coming this year with a massive 60-page brochure that boasts a dizzying number of events for all ages, gender and cultural backgrounds.

Book on MACFEST [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/organizers/macfest) page or on the website: www.macfest.org.uk